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NMC Policy Letter 04-01
5 MAR, 2001

From: Commanding Officer, U. S. Coast Guard National Maritime Center
To: Distribution

Subj: QUALIFICATION AS A RATING FORMING PART OF A NAVIGATIONAL
WATCH OR ENGINEERING WATCH

Ref: (a) Regulations II/4 and III/4 of the International Convention on Standards of
Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978, as amended (STCW)

1. This policy letter clarifies the requirements of reference (a) and establishes procedures for a mariner to qualify for an STCW certification as a rating forming part of either a navigational watch (RFPNW) or an engineering watch (RFPEW). It applies to applicants for either certification who:

a. Began the service or training on or after August 1, 1998, that leads to an STCW certification; or

b. Apply for an STCW certificate on or after February 1, 2002.

2. Addressees are requested to take the following actions:

a. RECs processing applicants for these STCW qualifications should be guided by the enclosures to this letter concerning the information required to be submitted as part of the application packages. The files of applicants for a RFPNW or RFPEW should include completed records of practical demonstrations of practical skills. These may consist of copies of the enclosures or similar records containing the same information; and

b. Officers in Charge, Marine Inspection (OCMI) should inform maritime interests within their areas of this policy letter.

3. Policy Letter 3-99 issued by the U. S. Coast Guard National Maritime Center is superseded and cancelled.

4. The STCW requires that mariners be assessed in their ability to actually perform certain skills in addition to other assessments of the professional knowledge and understanding of specified competencies. The enclosures to this policy letter provide guidance about the practical demonstrations of skills required to qualify for these STCW certifications. Enclosure (1) provides information about qualification as an RFPNW; enclosure (2) contains the equivalent information for a mariner to qualify as an RFPEW. Mariners listed in paragraph 1 who wish to apply for either of these STCW certifications should be guided by the information and procedures set forth in the applicable enclosure.

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5. The standards for the assessments of practical skills are based on the national recommended assessment guidelines and apply to applicants who are using the guidance in this policy letter to qualify for a certification. Training establishments or designated examiners may develop different, but equivalent, assessments. Before these locally developed assessment standards may be used to evaluate applicants, they must be reviewed and approved by the U. S. Coast Guard National Maritime Center.

6. This policy letter will be distributed by electronic means only. It is available on the World Wide Web at <http://www.uscg.mil/STCW/index.htm>.

DONALD J. KERLIN
Acting

Encl: (1) Requirements for qualification as an RFPNW
(2) Requirements for qualification as an RFPEW

Dist: Commandant (G-MOC)
Commandant (G-MSO)
All District Commanders (m)
All Cos, MSOs
All Activity Commanders
All RECs